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# American Art Journal.

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## THE FESTIVAL OF THE TRINITY CHOIRS.

The finest choral performance, as a whole, ever heard in America, was given on Thursday evening, April 25th, at St. John's Chapel, by the united choirs of Trinity Parish, assisted by members of the New York Harmonic Society and the Mendelssohn Union. A large orchestra sustained the accompaniments, enforced by the noble organ of the chapel. The Festival was given in aid of the funds of the poor of the Parish, and under the auspices of the Rector, Clergy, and Corporation of Trinity Parish. The musical department was under the direction of the organists of the Parish, Messrs. W. H. Walter, Mus. Doc., F. Erben, James Pech, Mus. Doc., and A. H. Messiter, Mr. James Pech being the Conductor.

The beautiful Chapel presented an imposing appearance on the occasion. A vast platform was erected in the chancel, extending as far as the altar and branching to the right and left, the whole forming an amphitheatre of imposing appearance, which was filled to its utmost capacity. The Chapel was filled in every part by the most decorous audience we ever saw gathered together at a musical festival.

Handel's "Oratorio of the Messiah" was selected for performance—a work which bears the stamp of an immortality, which shall defy all changes of form and fashion, and even the passing of time itself. Grand, Titanic in outline, broad and massive in the filling in, it still blends with sublime inspiration the dignity and grandeur of human sorrow. Marvelous in its completeness, it excludes the thought of satiety, and its subjects are as fresh and living as when first uttered to the delight of the world one hundred and twenty-five years ago.

Mr. James Pech, who is a stranger to our public and ourselves, is the most competent choral conductor now wielding the baton in America. He is firm as a rock and studies the tempi, not with a view to shorten the performance, but to make the numbers so clear as to develop their construction by bringing out each outline into clear relief, and affording scope for the natural evolution of effects. He led off the opening fugue in the overture at a tempo which would have confounded the harum-scarum conductors of the present day, who try to convert the sublime mastodonic march of Handel's movements, into sensational hurries. The result was that the fugue interested every one, producing that broad effect calculated and intended.

Mr. J. E. Perring, though evidently not certain of his voice, sang the fine Recitative and Air "Comfort ye my people," in a chaste, classic, and emphatic manner. It was the true school singing, just to the text, and free from all exaggeration. The following chorus, "And the Glory of the Lord," was sung in a broad and marked manner, with every point justly emphasized. We felt no fear after listening to the admirable performance of this number. The Recitative and Air, "Thus saith the Lord," was finely rendered by Mr. J. R. Thomas, who seemed to catch some of the spirit of his old fire, for he has not for years sang as faultlessly as on this occasion. "But who may abide" was a splendid example of the chaste ornate style, which would challenge the admiration of any audience. The following chorus, "And he shall purify," was very finely sung, and here the true tempo told, for all the running passages, so difficult for choristers to sing smoothly and equally, rolled one after the other with a precision and equality that rendered the effect magical. The fast men of to-day generally double the time for the reason that it is difficult to sing these passages at the proper time and evenly, and they hope by taking it at a hand gallop, to cover up the inequalities. It is a poor ruse, and essentially damaging to the composition. The same grand and satisfying effect was produced, and for the same reason, by the performance of the chorus, "For unto us a child was born." It was superbly sung, for the usually involved passages came out with a clearness of outline that made plain every form of the composition.

Miss Sterling sang the Recitative and Air, "Behold a Virgin shall conceive," in excellent style; her fine voice filled the Chapel, and she exhibits a rare excellence, purity and distinctness of enunciation. She also rendered with equal excellence, that wonderful art-burst of utter sorrow, "He was despised." This was, indeed, her finest vocal effort, and commanded the admiration of all present.

The Pastoral Symphony was smoothly and delicately played, and the Recitatives which followed, beginning with "There were Shepherds," were intelligently and effectively sung by Miss Maria Brainerd. They were well phrased, and distinctly enunciated. She also sang the triumphal Air, "Rejoice greatly," with a fine and smooth execution, though for its full effect it needs a voice of brighter sonority, and a manner with more impulse and dash. Her rendering of that sublime hymn of Faith and Consolation, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," was chastely eloquent, and breathed a spirit of pure devotion.

The chorus "Glory to God," was firm, decisive, and massive, but the chorus, "His Yoke is Easy," was not so satisfactory. The points were not so promptly taken up, nor was the spirit equally sustained. Still the performance

was of an average quality. To a certain extent, the same faults were observable in the grand sombre chorus, "Behold the Lamb of God." But these were more than compensated for by the magnificent rendering of the three following choruses, "Surely He hath borne," "And with His stripes," and "All we like Sheep." The execution of these choruses was faultless, and produced a visible sensation throughout the audience. The chorus, "Lift up your heads," was not firm in the beginning, but was steadied promptly and continued finely to the end. The same remarks will apply to "Let us break their bonds asunder." The choruses, "Let all the Angels" and "The Lord gave the Word," were sung with precision and spirit, and "Their sound is gone out into all lands," was sung finely in every essential point.

The Recitative and Air, "Thy rebuke" and "Behold and see," were rendered by Mr. Perring with fine expression and depth of pathos, as were also the Recitative and Air, "He was cut off" and "But Thou didst not leave," though why these last were allotted to Mr. Perring we are at a loss to conceive. We have heard this oratorio in a hundred places, but never before heard this exquisite treble aria sung by a tenor voice. It is an innovation, and by no means an improvement.

Mr. J. R. Thomas more than sustained his reputation, by his fine reading of the Recitative and Arias, "For behold darkness," "The people that walked in darkness," and "Why do the Nations?" He read them most artistically, and executed them with a polished smoothness, which but few artists acquire, and threw infinite spirit and dramatic force into that turbulent Aria, "Why do the Nations?"

Miss Matilda Phillips sang "He shall feed his flock," very gracefully. She has an excellent voice, but is as yet a novice in her art.

The crowning glory of this grand choral performance was that sublimely inspired and impressive Protestant Hymn of Praise, the unapproachable "Hallelujah." At the first tones of its majestic movement, the whole audience arose and remained standing, in breathless silence, until the last notes of that gigantic burst of choral song ceased, when an uncontrollable murmur of admiration and awed delight ran through the sacred place, dying away into a hushed whisper. The effect of the firm, massive and heartfelt singing of this grand Chorus, cannot be described. But it was to be seen on every face. A sublime enthusiasm seemed to diffuse itself through all the thousands present, and hearts beat quicker, and eyes flashed brighter, as peal after peal of that great wave of harmony rose up and filled the chapel as with a Presence. It was a triumph of Music, as that music was a triumph and an inspiration of Faith.

The lateness of the hour and the exigencies

of the press, compel us to close this notice, but as the "Messiah" is to be repeated on Thursday evening next, May 2d, we shall resume the thread of our article in our next issue. We cannot close, however, without reiterating our just praise of the whole performance. Mr. James Pech has proved himself a conscientious and sterling conductor, and has won and can maintain the leading position in that direction. Such a performance as he produced, and with materials so heterogeneous, cannot fail to arouse a general desire for frequent repetitions of grand Choral Festivals, and Mr. Pech is the only man here with the nerve, the will and the decision to carry them out successfully. Again we must compliment all concerned, and tell them that they may be proud of having assisted at a Musical Festival, truly worthy of the name.

THE ORACLE IS SILENT.

The simple and straightforward statement of George Steck & Co. versus Derby, U. S. Agent, in reference to the peculiar distribution of the space allotted to American Pianofortes at the French Exposition, continues to call forth severe comment from the New York press, or at least that portion of the press which is not subsidized by the most favored of the favored exhibitors. But Mr. Derby remains silent; wisely so, perhaps. His incompetency in that particular line of his duty is so manifest, that we sympathize with him in his belief that "the least said the soonest mended." To fall back on the interested opinion of others, is no tenable defence. To plead incompetence, is to proclaim one's self a humbug, and necessitates, to one of honorable mind, the resignation of an office whose requisitions he cannot fulfill, however profitable they may be to the administrator.

The great error will probably be brought home to the narrow party policy, and the mean and niggardly action of our national government, but the blame of the still meaner detail carrying-out, must rest with Mr. Derby. We await the development of this flagrant case of favoritism, as one of the aggrieved firms, George Steck & Co., does not seem inclined to let the matter rest.

When shall we hear from you, Mr. Derby?

A WESTERN APOLOGUE.

And it came to pass that a youthful enquirer of the knowledge, asked of his paternal progenitor one day, this pertinent enquiry: "Papa, why does neighbor Strangway swell out so? He expands his chest, squares his arms, occupies the space of three men on the sidewalk, and struts as though he owned all Union-Square."

"My son," said the revered parent, "neighbor Strangway is a type of the men who are

strong in the pocket, but weak in the intellect. He illustrates the old Spanish proverb, 'Put a beggar on horseback, and he rides to the &c., &c.' My son, you have often seen and made those beautiful bubbles which swell and swell, and rise and rise, glorying in a thousand variegated colors, until they, inevitably, burst. Remember, my son, they were only common soapsuds, after all.

"But the aptest illustration of our neighbor's expanding proclivities is, the ancient Aesop's fable of the Frog and the Bull. The smaller animal was emulous of the size of the larger one, and to attain the coveted proportions, he puffed, and puffed, and puffed himself out, until he burst before attaining the vast dimensions he strove for.

"The moral is, my son, do not puff yourself, and do not hire other persons to puff you. If you cannot make your way, upon your positive intrinsic merit, rest assured that, sooner or later, your bubble will be pricked, and will be collapsed beyond the hope of future redemption."

MUSIC OF THE PAST WEEK.

There has been no lack of excitement of a mild character in the Musical World during the past few days; many concerts have been given, with various success, all of them presenting excellent artists and pleasing programmes, and each one deserving of larger public patronage than it received. We do not know a better medium for sinking money than concert giving at the present time. It is a pleasant way, too, of disposing of superfluous cash, because the operation is free from all anxiety, the result—loss—being certain. The pleasure too, is further enhanced by the knowledge that an act of generosity is being accomplished, that a dainty entertainment is being spread before an appreciative public, numbering in money, perhaps, a score, swelled to a round thousand by accommodating and intelligent dead-heads. The enterprising artist feels a glow of honest pride and hearty satisfaction as he says to himself the next day, "Yes, I gave a concert last night, literally *gave* it. I made a success; all the assisting artists made successes, and I footed the bills." Verily, it is a noble and a profitable thing to be an artist, and concert giving as an expensive luxury, is not to be despised.

MR. J. N. PATTISON gave his second matinee, at Irving Hall, on Saturday the 20th inst., before a large and fashionable audience. He was assisted by Miss Antonia Henne, Miss Clementine Barnard, Signor Severini, Signor Strini, and Mr. J. B. Poznanski. This matinee was full of admirable points, for all the artists were eminently successful. Miss Antonia Henne has a contralto voice of very rich and beautiful quality, being well developed through

its whole register. She sings with grace and feeling, but her style needs refining and finishing. Experience will do much to remedy these wants, but close study is necessary to give her that artistic balance which comprehends dramatic vocal effects. Miss Henne has love and enthusiasm for her art, and will surely win a high position in her profession. Miss Clementine Barnard is a young pianist, of whom we shall surely hear more in the future. She is enthusiastic in the pursuit of her art, and has a quick aptitude for its acquirement quite remarkable. Her playing is full of dash and fire, her execution is neat, clean, and brilliant, and her sentiment is broad and impassioned. In her duets with Mr. Pattison she kept him up to his full power, and did her part in producing the really brilliant effect which those duos achieved. We shall watch the course of this young lady with much interest.

Signor Severini sang charmingly and effectively, and Signor Strini did his part with infinite dash and humor, and in his own song sang with true grace and warm expression. We are glad to welcome Signor Strini back to New York, for he is a reliable and excellent artist, and will certainly become popular with the public. Mr. J. B. Poznanski played Reber's "Berceuse," gracefully and tenderly, enlisting at once the sympathies of his audience. This composition, small as it is, requires a fine artistic interpretation to secure it any effect, and only the refined sentiment and assured skill of an Urso or a Poznanski, can achieve that end in its interpretation. Mr. Poznanski also played the well worn "Carnival de Venice," with clear, fine manipulation, and sufficient fire and eccentricity to secure for its performance a pronounced success.

Mr. Pattison played finely throughout the matinee. We have rarely heard his touch more steel-like and brilliant, or his execution more clear and unfailing. These excellences were particularly observable in Liszt's "Campanella," which was most brilliantly rendered. His own Fantasia, on themes from "The Doctor of Alcantara," was also finely played, and met with a marked success. It embraces some of the best melodies of the opera, the working together of which, and their varied treatment, are highly creditable to the author. This Fantasia will prove, we think, one of the most popular of Mr. Pattison's compositions.

Mr. Pattison will give his third matinee on Saturday next, May 4th, at Irving Hall, on which occasion he will be assisted by a brilliant array of talent.

THE FIFTH AND LAST CONCERT of the 25th season of the New York Philharmonic Society was given on Saturday evening last, at Steinway Hall, and under the special patronage of that peculiar institution. To prove that it was a brilliant success, we have only to announce that "My Piano" was played upon by "My